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*Notes from India.*—Letters to the Corresponding Secretary from Professor A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON, Columbia University, New York City.

1. Meeting with the Parsis.

BOMBAY, March 3, 1901.—These notes I send from Bombay, where I have been for a week or more, and a most interesting time it has been—filled with new impressions and full of profit, I hope, for my studies in the future. Such hospitality as the friends here seem to know how to extend, I never dreamed of.

There was a Parsi delegation on the wharf when the steamer arrived. A welcome was given that afternoon by a special meeting of the Society for Making Researches into the Zoroastrian Religion. It was a pleasure to meet among others, dear old Mr. Cama, the Nestor of Parsi scholars, upon whose shoulders his seventy or more years sit with the lightness of youth. The fine eye, the patriarchal beard, and the distinguished bearing reminded me of the impression given by the tall figures of the priests on the Ancient Persian sculptures.

On Monday I visited the Mulla Firoz Library, which adjoins one of the fire temples. After a peep at some of the old manuscripts, there was a rare treat accorded me to witness a special performance of the Yasna ceremony, or ritual worship. This was given that I might have a chance to study the performance of the rites as actually carried on. It was allowable to take notes, and every point was explained, with all its significance, even to the details when the little goat was milked to provide the *gam jīvyam*. The scene of the priest seated before the fire censer, the perfume of the incense, the use of the sacrificial metal cups which rang shrilly when struck during the preparation of the sacred *haoma*, is one that I shall not forget. The tones of the chanting *zōt* and *raspi* still ring in my ear; and as a memento of the ritual celebration I still have a couple of tiny twigs of the dried *haoma*-plant and a small band of the *urvarā*-tree used in binding the *barasma*, or barsom.

In the pronunciation of the officiating priests I noticed certain slight differences from the pronunciation that I have been using ;

they were more like the pronunciations I had been accustomed to before going into the matter of transcription, so I was prepared for this, and I have been discussing the question a little with the priestly authorities. They seem to show almost as much interest in hearing about the Western views and interpretations as I feel in learning from them. The West and East, they liberally emphasize, may be of mutual advantage to each other by interchanging views. Such kindness and courtesy as one meets at every step are delightful.

There has been a chance also to see the so-called Navjot ceremony, or initiation of a child into the mysteries of the religion. This ceremony corresponds in a way to our idea of confirmation. Some of it was very impressive. The company of twenty priests formed a hollow square as they squatted upon the floor, around a censer of the sacred fire. The child was a girl seven years old. She was brought in and placed in the midst of the square and various ceremonies were performed. She was then robed in the *sudrah* or sacred shirt, and it was bound with the *kusti*, or holy girdle—the *aiwyānāna* of the Avesta. The shirt represented the many good features of the religion in which she was now clothed, and it was bound with the girdle of good thoughts, good words, good deeds, truth, and the like. The Parsi is very particular in living up to the requirements of his religion in the matter of speaking the truth, and his word is regarded as good as his bond.

If there were time I could give you a description of a Parsi wedding to which I was invited, or could write of many other details crowded into the past eight days, with interviews, visits, appointments, receptions, inspection of educational institutions, and the like, but I have already been writing at too great length. There may be space, however, to add that I had an interesting day at the Karli caves with Dr. J. E. Abbott—one of our Oriental members as you will recall. Through the kindness of a Brahman acquaintance there was an opportunity to get into one of the smaller Indian temples, and I am invited to attend a Brahman wedding if I can stay till next Wednesday. The Burning Ghâts, now busy with plague victims, have been seen; and the Towers of Silence will be visited to-morrow. But enough! This communication will be too long.

I have occasion to thank you for your good letters of introduction, which I shall use. Please give to President Gilman, and to

each of our Fellow-Directors, my kindest remembrances, and add best wishes and a welcome to our Oriental members for the coming meeting at Columbia University. In closing I may say that I am counting on a visit, among other cities, to Ujjain.

## 2. Notes Descriptive of a Brahman Wedding.

BOMBAY, March 6, 1901.—An interesting experience it was indeed, to-day, to go out into the country to see a Hindu wedding through the courtesy of my kind Brahman acquaintance, Rājārām Rāmakrishna Bhāgavat. The bride was his cousin and he and his wife were her sponsors, as her parents were dead. The bride's name was Vatsalā, daughter of Bhāskara Hari Bhāgavat, and her age was fifteen. The groom, a young lawyer of twenty-three, was Sadāçiva Vishnu Parānjape, B.A., B.L. The novelty of the experience, and observing and taking notes of the various ceremonies connected with the wedding, kept my eyes and ears busy, and my thoughts occupied with matters pertaining to the Veda and the Gṛhya-sūtras, or combining India new with India old. The notes which I took on the spot may possibly have some interest. I give them for what they are worth as rough memoranda. There are, no doubt, mistakes or oversights in them, but I present them in about the form in which I wrote them down at the moment.

Arriving at the bride's house shortly after sunrise, for the wedding began at daylight, we were welcomed by our Brahman host. He wore a robe red in color, which recalled to me the wedding scene in the drama Nāgānanda. It was girt about his loins, and he was naked above the waist, except that he had on two *upavīts*, or sacred cords. The second was explained as worn to cover the upper part of the body, when no over-garment was used. He wore his head shaven with the exception of the crown lock. He and his wife and the bride were now in their places in the large room of the dwelling, and were squatting upon a low board that was raised about an inch from the floor. A candle was near, and auspicious marks of red chalk were visible in a number of places. The bride herself was likewise dressed in red garments, and decked with some ornaments. She wore the nose-ring common among some of the women of India. The *tilak* or forehead mark was observed.

At the moment of our arrival the presentation of fruits, coconuts, and mango-leaves, for use in the ceremony, or as part of it,

was in order. Water was poured on the hands of the bride each time, and *mantras* accompanied the presentation. At this instant music from the native band, which had just arrived, interrupted all conversation and explanations. From the adjoining room attendants entered with a tray, holding some vegetables or greens and mango-leaves rolled up together and tied. Each time a gift was presented it was first touched against the hands of our Brahman host, acting in the place of the dead father. When this special tray of nuts, fruits, and leaves was presented, the family deity, Kanakeçvara, a form of the sun, was invoked to make the occasion auspicious. To this presiding divinity two cocoanuts were consecrated. The special family *purohit*, chaplain, as we were informed, was absent at the time, so another priest had to be installed in his place. A fire-censer we remarked was lighted, and gifts of cocoanut, clothes, etc., were again brought in on a tray. The father of the groom had also a present of ornaments to make to the bride. He placed red paste or powder on her forehead and also between the brows of her guardian and the latter's wife. Our Brahman host touched these gifts each time to his forehead in accepting them for the bride. The gift of an elaborate head-dress for the girl was quite effective. This was presented with a ball of sugar-candy, or sweetmeat confection (*mandala*).

Next followed a special oblation by the bride to the guardian deity and presiding divinities of the home. The details were not all quite clear to me and my notes had to be hurriedly taken to keep pace with the ceremony. But I record them as I took them down. In one corner of the large room there was a small altar or shrine with little figures and various objects about it. This was sacred to the family-god, *deva*, and to minor female divinities, *devikās*, as far as I caught the explanations. The latter were six in number. The names as I jotted them down were *Nandinī*, *Nalinī*, *Māitrā* (sic), *Umā*, *Paçuvardhanī*, and *Çastragarbhā Bhagavatī*, the goddess who presides over the cutting of the umbilical cord. There was an earthen jar or jug, designated as *devaka*, that contained rice and other materials. Our Brahman friend said that originally the leaves of five different plants or trees should be the contents of this jar: (1) turmeric plant, the hard yellow root of which is used in cookery and in dyeing; (2) almond tree, (3) walnut, (4) betel nut, (5) mango leaves. A cloth jacket for the goddess lay among the things on the tray

before the shrine. White was noticeable as a color, perhaps indicative of virginity (cf. Skt. *gāurikā*, *gāurī*). Rice was also laid on a seat for the Goddess of Abundance, *annapūrṇā*.

The bride now squatted in front of the altar and placed on a stone seat a small image of a god, which she proceeded to worship. I was told she would come again and worship this little figure on the sixth day after having given birth to a child. The *mantras* which she recited were in Marāṭhi, not in Sanskrit; the import of one or two was noted: "May the family spread like a banyan tree," etc.; "This is the husband of my choice;" "To thee, O Īiva and Parvatī, I bow." The same she repeated again before the arrival of the bridegroom; but, meantime, we went outside the house to observe the preparations in the courtyard, or platform before the door.

The *purohit* was arranging for the ceremonies that were to take place there. At the door of the house there was a large jar filled with water. On its surface a small metal cup was floating. This cup had a small hole in the bottom, so that it gradually filled and sank to the bottom of the larger vase. It required twenty-four minutes for this to take place, and as the operation had to be repeated seven times after sunrise before the marriage ritual could be performed, the time would be 168 minutes after the sun was up. The two vessels served, therefore, as a clepsydra, and the ministering priest sprinkled water from them on the ground as he worshipped this ritual timepiece, reciting verses that were hardly audible. A mango leaf, I noticed, rested on the rim of the vessel; a taper was burning near; and rice, betel-nut leaves and yellow turmeric paste were present in abundance. Symbols and memoranda were painted in Nāgarī characters on the wall of the house, near the door. Some of these gave the date and a record of the casting of the horoscope, which the priest drew from an almanac printed in Sanskrit letters. The planetary influence and the asterisms were duly explained.

It was now time to visit the groom's house, perhaps a quarter of a mile, or more, distant. As we entered, I noticed that he, too, was not without a decorative headdress. A fire censer was burning also here in the entry. A brief ceremonial breakfast was going on. It is customary for the bride's mother—in this case her cousin or guardian—to offer food to the groom while still at his own house. His friends were seated by his side, squatting upon low seats. From plantain leaves, as plates, he was eating

some curds and parched rice. The Hindu meals, as we know, are usually taken with the body stripped to the waist; on this ceremonial occasion all was done in full costume. Relatives of the bride also joined in waiting upon the groom and his friends; and we noticed the nose-rings of the women and the ringbands adorning their bare feet. When the brief repast was over and removed, all arose. A black spot was now put on the groom's face to ward off the evil eye. He then proceeded to his room to go through the *devaka*-ceremony, which is a counterpart of that performed by the bride.

On the completion of this rite the wedding procession was ready to start. The groom took his seat in a victoria; his little sister with her tiny nose-ring, and an earring in the upper part of the ear instead of the lower lobe, was by his side. The oldest sister also occupied a place in the carriage. The native band struck up; the pipes and *tam-tams* united to make the sound a merry one; and the procession started along the dusty way with the women going first, according to ancient custom.

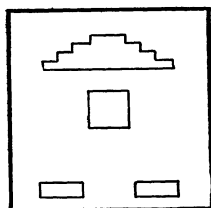
When the groom reached the bride's house, water was poured upon his feet, but with no special ceremonial performance. The bride was seen still worshipping at the household altar. The groom now put on a wedding garment and the couple met and were placed opposite each other with a screen or cloth, *antarpāt*, interposed between them, so that they could not see each other.

In a nasal tone the priest began to chant the *mantras*, but not in canonical Sanskrit, it seemed. Rice was thrown again and again. At this point the bride's red shawl, *sāri*, was taken off, so that she appeared in white. An interchange of gifts between the nuptial pair took place beneath the cloth that still separated them. The second priest took up the chant, and at every *sarvadāna* a handful of rice was thrown. The dividing cloth was now lifted, and amid the loud clapping of hands and the noise of *tam-tams*, pipes, cymbals, and music, the congratulations to the newly married couple were in order.

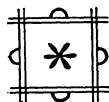
This completed the first stages of the ceremony, and the pair were now seated on low settees, opposite each other, and cocoanuts were presented. The bride was again decked in her red attire, with white cloths and yellow turmeric coloring. Some *mantras*, according to the *Gr̥hya-Sūtras*, followed, and the bride and groom began tossing rice upon each other. Rose water and perfume were sprinkled among the guests; and cardamon seeds

and cloves were handed around. At the *madhuparka* part of the ceremony we were courteously invited to partake of the wedding breakfast, by ourselves, up stairs. Seated in Hindu fashion upon the floor, and eating with our fingers from plantain leaves, we enjoyed the viands, which consisted largely of cakes, sweetmeats, and sugar balls, washed down in English style with drafts of tea.

By this time, five of the seven stages had been gone through. The sixth was the formal covenant before the altar in the presence of the holy fire and the Brahman priest. This now took place. A quadrangular space for the *vedī*, or altar, was already arranged under a tiny bower or thatched canopy in the courtyard. The altar and quadrangle were in this shape.



The square and rectangular blocks indicate little seats for the priest and the bride and groom. Brass vessels, bundles of straw, *barhis*, and a wicker basket were lying round about. The priest proceeded to arrange the altar place. The ground was first sprinkled with water; then white lines of powder, or chalk, were strewn or drawn in the midst. A little image, yellow with turmeric, was in the center (\*) of the figure drawn by the priest, a diagram of which is given.



But all these details had consumed a great deal of time. The hour was moving on towards noon, and we had an appointment to meet in Bombay, so that we could not stay to witness all. The remaining ceremonies consisted in tying the garments of the couple together in a nuptial knot, and the formal 'seven steps,' *saptapadī*, around the altar, after which the priest pronounces the solemn union and the marriage is irrevocable. At two in the afternoon the bride and groom would formally eat together, each



giving the other seven (?) mouthfuls. The ceremonious pronouncing of the names, *āhvāna*, follows in a rhyming couplet, and there were to be ritual observances at the door of the groom's house when he took the bride to his home that evening. But alas! there was not time to wait for all this, as we had been away from the city since before daylight.

One special observance connected with Hindu marriages was mentioned as customary. It is the tree-marriage, so often referred to in ancient and modern popular literature. [The special application of this to the "third wife" has been alluded to by Professor Ladd in this volume of the *Journal*, above, p. 228.] If a man loses two wives there is a common belief he will lose the third. Accordingly if he wishes to wed again he goes through the ceremony of marrying a tree as the third wife. He may then with safety wed the woman of his choice, because she becomes number four, and the evil lot of being number three falls upon the tree. A reverend Christian who accompanied me, and was a Brahman by birth, told me that his own uncle had gone through this ceremony. There were dozens of other minor details in manners and customs that interested me in this connection and made more real and living what I had known before only through ancient texts, or the often dry medium of books.

### 3. Sanjan, or the Scene of the First Parsi Settlement in India.

SANJAN, March 7, 1901.—On the journey northward, after leaving Bombay, there was a good opportunity to visit the old town of Sanjan, which is the scene of the earliest Parsi settlement in India. This town, now nearly deserted, was once a sort of Plymouth for the early Parsi exiles from Persia. According to their traditions this is the spot where first they landed on Indian soil and found a home among the mild and tolerant Hindus, after being driven out of Iran by the Mohammedan conquest. I had the advantage, when making the visit, of enjoying the escort of Mr. R. P. Karkaria, the well-known Parsi writer, whose knowledge of Parsi history and interest in all matters relating to his community made him a most admirable *cicerone*.

According to the chronicle records of the *Kissah-i Sanjan* (transl. by Eastwick, JRAS., B.B., i. 167–191) the Parsis landed at Sanjan, A.D. 775 or on other authority in A.D. 716. The discrepancy between the dates is probably to be explained by the fact of two successive bands of immigrants—see Dosabhai F. Karaka,

*History of the Parsis*, i. 30 note, and K. N. Seervai and B. B. Patel, *Gujarat Parsis from their earliest Settlements*, p. 3. These Zoroastrian exiles, after being allowed to settle at Sanjan, formed a thrifty and flourishing community and remained there until Mohammedan persecution in A.D. 1315 forced them to flee to the Bhārut hills, which one sees about eight miles to the east of Sanjan. Thither they carried their sacred Bahrām fire and cherished it amid various vicissitudes until happier events restored their fortune and brought with them once more the freedom to worship Ormazd without persecution from Islam.

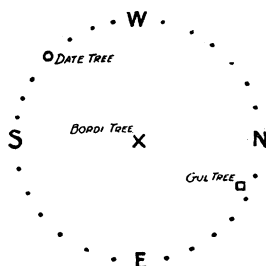
From the railway station of Sanjan, where kind attentions were shown by the native Hindu officials and several Parsi hosts, we started out at daylight on foot to visit the scenes of interest in connection with the place. The road led some little distance before we turned aside on the left to inspect the ruins of a Portuguese fort, within whose dilapidated walls the niches of a tumbled-down chapel for the soldiers of the garrison could still be recognized. From this point it was no long walk to the modern Sanjan—a hut village, as it might be termed, which strangely recalled the prescriptions of the Vendidad for cases in which it was found ‘easier to remove the house’ than to remove the body of the man who had died within it (Vd. 8. 1–3).

The principal habitation that attracted attention was an old Parsi rest-house (or Dharmagāl, as the Hindus call it) built through the generosity of Vikaji Mehrji, of Tarapora, a place thirty miles from Sanjan. It formed part of a large square enclosure, measuring, perhaps, 400 or 500 feet in each direction. The entire compound was surrounded by a wall with gates opening to the east and the west. To-day no Parsis live there; the huts are occupied only by Hindus and Mohammedans, who show little evidence of thrift or welfare. Near by the enclosure, but not within it, there were the remains of an old altar, with a stone *līṅga* and *yoni*, as signs of Īiva worship.

To the left of the quadrangular enclosure, just mentioned, stands the site of the old Parsi settlement of Sanjan. It is now perfectly desolate, an undulating field or plain about a quarter of a mile square. Everywhere there are remnants of bricks that had been used in building. The ground was strewn with countless small fragments, and there were scores of fine large brick slabs, more than a foot square, and four or five inches in thickness, that seemed to be very old indeed.

A short distance to the northwest was an old well, still in use, and a number of women were drawing water from it for washing purposes. Beyond this we crossed over some plowed land, that had been arranged for irrigation, but was still covered with fragments of bricks from the early settlement, and we passed a remarkable mango tree that grew like a banyan. The most interesting spot, and the special object of the visit, was now in sight.

The point to which our steps were directed was an elevation or hillock about an eighth of a mile off. Upon this, it is probable, stood the first Parsi *dakhma*, or Tower of Silence, in India. The slight eminence commands a good view. Somewhat to the south there is a grove of trees, and there are evidences near by of a water-course; but how old that particular course might be was uncertain, as streams in India change their beds so often. On the elevation itself the rough outline of a circle, with a central depression, could be made out without much difficulty. A rude diagram sketched in my note book looks something like this:



The quasi-circuit was made by the slightly raised earth around the depression; its circumference was almost 45 yards. There was no wall of stone or masonry standing, but one of our hosts, a middle-aged man, had still seen the wall standing. It had been pulled down and used for building purposes, he said. Tradition points to the spot as that of a *Dakhma*, and the people know it by that name. We were standing on the ground hallowed, no doubt, by the earliest Parsi pilgrims from Iran.

It is reasonable to suppose also that there must have been a *sagri*, or shrine, near by in the neighborhood, from which a lamp or sacred fire could send its ray over to the *Dakhma*. But such a spot was not easily identified. The native guide, quite picturesque in his red shawl or cloak, started off to a slight elevation, about an eighth of a mile distant to the northeast, where he said

there was once a building. It is possible that some *atash gāh*, or shrine for the fire, may once have stood there, as the place of worship for the old town. There were the self-same remnants of bricks here and there, which may have belonged to a temple even if the distance were rather far for the Sagri of the Dakhma itself. The site, at any rate, is of interest and Mr. Karkaria expressed hopes of some time being able to make excavations there, and in the neighborhood, with the possible likelihood of finding some remains connected with this earliest Parsi settlement in India. If any such finds could be made, they would necessarily be of interest to the modern Zoroastrians as adding further knowledge regarding the history of their ancient faith.

#### 4. A Legend about Kālidāsa preserved at Ujjain.

UJJAIN, March 11, 1901.—In my short stay at Ujjain I collected some material in the way of tradition that may be worth working up in the future in connection with Sanskrit legend relating to Vikramāditya, Bhartṛihari, and Avantī or Old Ujjain, as rendered famous also by Kālidāsa's name. On my visit it was my privilege to meet Mr. Keshao Rao Ramaji Thomrey, who is engaged in the revenue service and the duties of a magistrate of His Highness Sitoliya Sahib of the Gwalior State. He kindly acted as host and guide, and from him I gathered a number of legends that were current among the people or were familiar in his family. One of these about Kālidāsa may merit recording. I do not know that it has been previously reported in Western journals, but I may be wrong, as I have no books at hand to consult. At any rate I do not recall having read it, and I give the legend in brief, much as my courteous informant told it to me.

The story runs that Kālidāsa was fond of fish and enjoyed angling. He used to go to the bank of the river Kshipra (Mod. Sipra), near Ujjain to perform his religious ablutions and engage in his devotions. Then he would fall into meditation, and while meditating, as the story goes, he would sometimes drop a line or cord into the water. [Was this his *yajñopavīta*? An Izaak Walton would have known how to sympathize with him.] On the farther end of the thread was attached a hook (*baliya* in the Mālavi dialect of the modern Hindu). Thus our Kālidāsa would sit and catch fish—a doubtful employment for one of the Brahmanical caste! And on catching a fish he rolled it up in a *sola*-packet and placed the bundle under his arm.

Now certain rivals or enemies, on observing this, went and told King Vikrama that this Brahman Kālidāsa was indulging in fishing. Our poet was accordingly summoned into the king's presence, still carrying under his arm the bundle that contained his haul. The king, then, in a Sanskrit *śloka*, which I hope to secure, as it is current, although my informant could not recall it verbatim, asked our poet what that was which he had under his arm. In rhythmical verse Kālidāsa at once responded that it was a pious book. "But what," queried the king, "are those drops (i. e. water) that are falling from it?" With equal facility the bard answered in polished verse, "It is the ambrosia of the Veda," *vedāmṛta*. And, lo, by a miracle, when the bundle was unrolled the contents were found to be actually a book and no longer a dripping fish! Thus were our Kālidāsa's enemies put to confusion.

This new instance of the favor of the gods as shown to the child of the Muses, though 'not written in choice Italian,' as Hamlet would say, is preserved in Hindī and in Marāṭhi, and the metrical *ślokas* upon which the point of the story turns, are in Sanskrit. The legend is a good one and it seems worth adding to the lore connected with the Hindu Shakspeare.